

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 5, 2014
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of February 5, 2014 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair (CC) Wright, Vice Chair Wong, Commissioner (C) Michaels, Bortoli, Runyan, Youth Commissioner (YC) Fox, C Block and YC Singer.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: C Sullivan

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, Recreation Manager (RM) Brunson, Recreation Supervisor (RS) Doherty and Secretary Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C Block questioned if the bullet point stating “*The Department does not have adequate staff to properly maintain open space*” captures what was said. The tape will be reviewed and the minutes will be brought back to the next meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Perry Kennan complimented the reopening celebration at the Senior/Community. He noted he sent a list of questions to the Commission regarding the bridge and Water Dog Lake and that his photos were forwarded to the Commission that show a solution to steep trails using posts and rope.

C Bortoli reported on the Senior Advisory Board meeting. The seniors are pleased with the refurbishing of the Senior Center. The Board discussed the funding shortfall to cover the cost of new furniture. The seniors suggested more bids be obtained. He added the seniors will provide some money through the Senior Fund but wondered if the City would contribute towards the furniture. They will meet again to discuss this topic on February 11.

C Runyan provided health and wellness updates. The Belmont /Redwood Shores School District has an ongoing health grant and will use it for staff wellness to make sure teachers are healthy and provide good role models for youths. There will also be a special School Health Summit for the County of San Mateo at the end of February.

C Wright commented that she was impressed with the attendance at the grand reopening of the Twin Pines Senior & Community Center. She noted she spoke with Mr. Keenan at the event about the trails and found out that there has been unorganized trail work which she noted.

PRD Gervais expressed thanks to the Commissioners that attended the Reopening Celebration at the Twin Pines Senior & Community Center.

PRD Gervais announced the following:

- The Commission Appreciation Dinner would be held on Monday, February 24, 2014.
- The City's new website is currently in testing mode and expected to go live in March.
- Improvements have been completed in Twin Pines Park by the Buckeye Picnic Area. He expressed thanks to the Belmont Park Boosters for their \$5,000 donation towards this project.

RM Brunson announced Youth Sports Opening Days to be held at the Belmont Sports Complex:

- Belmont/Redwood Shores Youth Softball Association – Friday, February 28 at 6:00 pm
- Belmont/Redwood Shores Little League – Saturday, March 8th at 8:30 am.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion of Recreation Programs Planning and Performance

PRD Gervais introduced Recreation Manager George Brunson, Recreation Supervisor Mary Doherty, Finance Commissioner Joyce Montgomery and former Parks & Recreation Commissioner Judy King.

PRD Gervais reviewed the various programs offered in the Recreation Division and invited feedback from the Commission. Information was provided on the following programs:

- Recreation Classes
- Teen Programs and VOICES (Volunteer, Outreach, Involvement , Community Events and Services)
- Events & Partnerships
- Preschool Program
- Senior Services
- Youth Sports & Athletic Fields
- Recreation Facilities

PRD Gervais explained the budget funding cap, and support levels established by the City Council and reviewed future plans to continue improving programs in the Recreation Division.

In response to CC Wright's request Judy King provided information and answered questions about the Park Boosters and the summer concert series.

- The concert series have been going on for 38 years.

- Belmont Park Boosters is a non-profit organization.
- History on the Park Boosters is posted on their website.
- There are seven concerts every summer starting in mid-June through July.
- Musicians are chosen by the board with goal of having seven different types of music.
- There are regular bands and new groups are also given an opportunity to perform.
- Funds are raised by concessions, donations and members. Sometimes there are sponsors that cover the cost of a band's performance.
- Funds raised are given to the City. The Park Boosters asks staff what they can contribute towards and sometimes the Parks Boosters will offer suggestions on improvements.
- Average attendance at the concerts is 300 people per week.
- Concerts are held only at Twin Pines Park.
- Concert promotion is accomplished by flyers, website, Patch, banner across Ralston Avenue, signboard, bulletin boards and the Activity Guide.
- 20-30 bands apply each year. Requests are accepted in January only.
- There are approximately 50 active members in the Park Boosters.
- Bands are paid.

Staff responded to Commission questions:

- Staying well below the cap set by the City Council gives staff the ability to try and expand programs.
- It is possible to find uniqueness in registration enrollments so staff can review new customers.
- Other cities are often collaborators that provide partnerships to get enough enrollments for programs.
- Prices for classes are typically set slightly below market to provide a good value.
- Contract Instructors know the price point for their business and assist staff with determining class fees.
- The \$560,000 cap is the net amount between revenue and expenditures.
- Dynamic pricing ideas that may be considered include increased rates on weekends for non-Belmont based groups and the creation of a campus rental rate.
- Summer camp staff is recruited through Cal-Opps.org available on the City's website, from partner organizations, and referrals. Recruitment starts in February.
- 518 youths participated in the Aquatics Programs in the summer of 2013 and there were 1800 participants in the Recreation & Lap swim portion of the program. Aquatics staff is recruited from local colleges and referrals and need to be certified in Lifeguard Training.
- The camp name has changed this year to Camp SOAR (Summer Outdoor Adventure Recreation) with Eagles for the 7-10 year old campers and Hawks for the 4-6 year old camp.
- A unique program in Belmont is Taiko Drumming which has been successful.
- Staff has tried offering separate classes at the same time for parents and children with limited success but will continue to pursue opportunities.
- The aquatics program is successful for a seven week program with time constraints. Fitness programs such as water aerobics could be offered if more time were available to use the pool. The Carlmont Pool is an outdoor pool that is often windy and cold.
- Recreation programs are advertised through the Activity Guide, the City's website, Facebook, signboard, Ralston banner, camp fairs, and notifying past participants.
- New ideas come up through partnerships, brainstorming, and training.

- There is a \$2.50 registration fee per receipt when registering through Active Net. In the past the fees were much higher using the variable percentage fee.
- Few arts and crafts classes have had success with arts and crafts camps doing better.
- If the Preschool Program is reduced it would move into two classrooms and move away from part-time care and have more full-time care.

C Block expressed appreciation for great work in increasing revenue and decreasing costs. He noted the reduction in fees was good and suggested eliminating the registration fee by absorbing it in the price of the class.

YC Fox noted there are many great opportunities for youth but suggested offering workshops instead of camps for teens.

C Wong thanked staff for the presentation. He suggested that dynamic pricing include an incentive to use other facilities by offering a lower fee when there is high demand for some facilities.

C Runyan noted the Parks & Recreation Department plays a role in creating culture in a city and thanked staff for their hard work.

C Bortoli added he has been impressed with staff's willingness to try new programs. He commented there is a need for part-time child care and suggested adding a classroom instead of eliminating one.

C Michaels recommended getting statistics to assist with marketing, offering science and engineering courses for youths, and having an entrepreneurship program for teens connecting them with local businesses and city government. He also suggested more utilization of the open space programming. C Michaels would like to see more programs for working parents and having more activities available to meet their schedules.

YC Singer suggested offering a music camp in the summer and having teens volunteer in this program.

CC Wright questioned if there could be more partnerships with local schools in order to offer recreation classes on the school grounds. RS Doherty explained it is not easy to get space on the school site but there has been some interest from Central School and she is working with them to see if that could happen in the fall.

CC Wright requested there be more wellness classes offered; particularly cooking classes. C Runyan noted the school was able to offer this through the grant they received and they could revisit this and work with Parks & Recreation to offer it again.

CC Wright suggested working with a local swim school to see if Lifeguard training could be offered at their site. She also spoke in support of leading hikes in the open space. In addition, she would like there to be a Mother/Son event.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- The design continues on the Synthetic Turf Project.
- The CEQA compliance and design are progressing on Davey Glen Park.
- Fire Safe Crews have been in the open space clearing vegetation back from trails and did a significant amount of work in the San Juan Canyon area.
- There appears to be ticks with Lyme disease on some of the trails in the Water Dog Lake open space. Warning signs have been posted and there may be some spraying on impacted trails.
- Staff has been working with San Mateo County Energy Watch and PG&E on making city buildings more energy efficient.
- Carpet will be replaced in the Taube Room at the library.
- The next Barrett Ad-Hoc Committee meeting will be rescheduled.

The Commission discussed posting their photos on the city's website and there was consensus to do so. Staff will check into what type of photos would be displayed.

C Bortoli reminded staff about the request to get lights at the entrance to Twin Pines Park.

C Bortoli reported a fence in need of repair on Ralston along the pathway by Fox School.

PRD Gervais noted staff will have another furniture vendor bring in some furniture to the Senior/Community Center to try out and he will provide some lower priced options.

C Block reported he has heard concerns from several people about dog waste in Semeria Park. PRD Gervais noted there are signs posted but he will check if there is a dog waste bag dispenser installed in the park.

C Wong noted he has been questioned if the restroom will be improved in Alexander Park. PRD Gervais explained this project has been included in the budget but funding is needed.

B. Future Agenda Items

General Plan

Public/Private Partnership

Restrooms in Parks

San Juan Canyon Interpretive Program

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director